

ART IN AMERICA · AN ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE · VOLUME V NUMBER V · AUGUST MCMXVII

A SMALL CRUCIFIXION BY PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA · BY ARTHUR POPE

AMONG a number of notably fine paintings by masters of the Renaissance which have recently been loaned for special exhibition at the Fogg Museum of Harvard University, one of the rarest, as well as one of the most beautiful in color and design, is a small painting on panel of the Crucifixion by Piero della Francesca (or more properly dei Franceschi), never before exhibited in this country and not hitherto published. It is owned by Mr. Carl W. Hamilton of Great Neck, L. I., and was formerly in the collection of the Colonna family in Rome. Because of the gold background and the bright color, which is found especially in the middle group of figures, the general effect of the picture at first sight seems unusual for this master, especially if the picture is seen in such a light that the gold shines, for this entirely obliterates the sense of space which the landscape otherwise conveys, and also "kills" all the grays, which are usually the dominant tones in his work. The only other work of Piero's now extant in which there is a gold background is the polyptych of the Misericordia at Borgo San Sepolcro; and, with the exception of this polyptych, which was ordered in 1445 and probably finished within the next two or three years, it is altogether probable that this Crucifixion is the earliest extant painting on panel by his hand. The lively play of bright color, red, scarlet, blue, green and violet, in the central portion of the picture, framed in by more characteristic passages in which pearly grays predominate—the group of horsemen at the right is especially lovely in color and quality—reminds one more definitely than most of Piero's work of the fact that Domenico Veneziano was his master.

In drawing, the details of this picture recall most strikingly Piero's frescoes in San Francesco at Arezzo, which were painted between 1452 and 1466; but, in quality and handling, the picture comes

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closer to the allegorical paintings—with small figures on the reverse sides—of the portraits of Federigo da Montefeltro and Battista Sforza, in the Uffizi. Piero must have painted the Crucifixion when the material of the San Francesco frescoes was “running in his head”—he may have referred to some of the sketches and studies for the large frescoes, of which he must have possessed a considerable store—for one can match a large part of the details in the small Crucifixion with similar details in the frescoes: one need mention only the foreshortened horse on the left, which is like the horse in the fresco of the Queen of Sheba and Solomon; the knight mounted on this horse, who is like the knight in the center of the Battle of Maxentius—the drawing of the leg is almost identical in the two pictures; the horse and rider at the right, who is like the horse and rider, turned the other way, at the left of the Battle of Maxentius, or a horse and rider in the center of the other battle fresco; the head of Christ, which is like the head of God the Father in the fresco of the Annunciation; or the tree, which is like the tree in the Queen of Sheba and Solomon. The landscape recalls especially that in the portrait of Battista Sforza and that in the Allegory in which she figures. The armor of the knight is the same as that worn by Federigo in the other Allegory. As the portraits in the Uffizi were painted in 1465 or 1466, one may conclude that the Crucifixion was painted between 1460 and 1465, though possibly somewhat earlier.

On close examination one finds that the drawing of the small figures in the Crucifixion is throughout less precise and less subtle than that in the corresponding figures in the large frescoes, that there is, indeed, as compared with the firm and definite handling of the frescoes, a certain sketchiness—even clumsiness—in the drawing of many details, as if the painter had used a medium which was a little too thick to allow of very delicate modeling or precise delineation on a small scale. In the preliminary outline of the figure of Christ there are subtleties which the painter evidently found impossible to follow with the paint. It is possible that this was due partly to the fact that Piero was experimenting with the rather thick oil medium used by his master, Domenico, or else was using a thick tempera; but it was probably due also to the procedure, which was different from the usual tempera method of carefully modeled underpainting in *verde terra* with warm tones added above, and more like that

which Piero employed in the frescoes of San Francesco, according to the latest study of these frescoes, published by Russell Cowles, in the *Journal* of the American Institute of Architects for June, 1916. In these frescoes, writes Mr. Cowles, "Piero laid in his composition, part by part, in absolutely flat tones. This much was done in fresco. . . . All the subsequent work was done in secco, in the regular tempera method, probably with casein for a binding medium. . . . These flat tones were so carefully and admirably related to one another in values of light and dark and color that I would almost say they constitute the charm of the finished work . . . the subsequent modeling of individual objects becomes of secondary importance." The same general procedure, although in a different medium and on a minute scale, is to be observed in the Crucifixion. In the flesh, as in the figure of Christ, the brownish middle tint was first laid on flat, and then the darks, comparatively thin, and the lights, thick and opaque, were put on over this; the details of features, eyes, lips, nostrils, etc., were added as final accents, and painted rather than drawn. Other fields were apparently executed in a similar manner. This method of painting, as well as perhaps a thick medium, would account for the sketchy character of the painting and for the less subtle drawing, as compared with his large frescoes, which is to be found not only in the Crucifixion but to some extent in Piero's other panel paintings with small figures, the Allegories of the Uffizi and the Flagellation in the Gallery at Urbino; it may also account in considerable measure for the unparalleled clearness of quality in his panel paintings.

In spite of a certain quaint naïveté of expression, this Crucifixion is dignified and noble, and delightfully straightforward in its conception; and in its formal design it is especially significant. In the opinion of the present writer, it must be placed in the small group of finest renderings of the subject of the Crucifixion—in fact, from the point of view of general formal scheme, hardly until we come to Tintoretto do we find another painting of this subject so felicitous in the arrangement of the groups of figures. The whole composition seems to be thought out on the basis of a geometrical division and subdivision of the area, which produces an unusually satisfying relation of lines and masses. The inclined ledge on the cross, bearing the feet of Christ, comes exactly in the center of the composition, and the lower part of the cross is relieved against a delightful bit

of landscape which shows through the symmetrical opening between the figures on either side. The group of figures below balances the figure of Christ in a curiously exact fashion, the straight line underneath corresponding to the arm of the cross, while the raised arm of one figure and the sword of another help to echo the lines of the arms of the Christ. The diagonals passing through the center are emphasized by the spears and the banners at either side, and even by the hands of the Virgin on one side and the feet of the horses on the other. The composition is particularly interesting for the way in which the central group of actors in the drama is set off and framed in by the groups of horsemen on either side, which correspond almost exactly in the shapes and measures of their main masses—the fore-leg of the horse on the right is even managed to correspond to the leg of the knight on the left. The division into groups is arranged with the greatest skill, and makes the composition remarkably clear and simple. Above everything else the painting is a beautiful decoration of the flat surface; and this was, just as much in painting on panels as on walls, always the first care of the painter, for it must be remembered that the panels were merely parts of church or household furniture. Like the so-called “scientist” painters of Florence, from whom he derived chief inspiration, Piero was more than a mere scientist. Too often painters like Paolo Uccello, Castagno or Domenico Veneziano are considered of interest merely for their study of anatomy, perspective, foreshortening: or their experiments in a new medium; but they were all primarily beautiful painters, and Piero shared Uccello’s feeling for color and for design.

Although this painting of the Crucifixion is not at all literal in aim, or completely dramatic in the sense that Tintoretto’s Crucifixions are dramatic, yet it possesses great interest on this side as well. The part which each figure plays is carefully thought out, and clearly and convincingly, if very simply, expressed—the swooning Virgin, supported by the other women, the rapturous St. John and the devout knight are all distinctly moving, while the realism of the soldiers drawing lots in the foreground is an effective contrast to the very nobly conceived figure of Christ.

Except for the crackle in the gold ground—similar to the crackle in the *Misericordia* polyptych—and an apparent rubbing of the surface in places, especially in the heads of the women which look a little hazy, the picture is in good condition and little repainted.

CHINESE PAINTINGS IN THE MUSEUM OF FINE
ARTS, BOSTON: PART THREE · BY HAMILTON BELL

CHINESE painting may be said to have culminated in Sung times, and thereafter we witness a gradual descent with occasional flashes of brilliant achievement on the part of individuals. The greatest of these were to all intents and purposes Sung painters, inheriting direct from their immediate predecessors of the end of that dynasty. In the Yüan period this falling off may have been, to some extent, due to the fact that this dynasty was that of a foreign conqueror, with different if not inferior tastes.

As we have seen, the Boston Museum collection is stronger in landscape than in the religious art of the earlier dynasties; when we come to the Yüan period (1260-1368 A.D.) we find this condition reversed. The best examples of the painting of this era, in Boston, are Buddhist, and some of these are very fine. The chief marks of decadence, in this branch of art, are a certain tendency to coarseness of type, noticeable in the clumsiness of the proportions, and a marked increase in the amount of ornament and decoration, with which the pictures are frequently overloaded.

There are a number of paintings of Rakan, notably a series signed by Liu Hsin-ch'ing, of Early Yüan, which are almost as fine as those of Sung already described, as are two notable and somewhat uncommon paintings of two of the ten kings or judges of Hell, also by him. The most striking of the religious paintings is a large Shaka Preaching (Fig. 1), which in its sumptuous coloring, the lavish use of gold, and particularly in the magnificent composition of the circular haloes which enshrine the Buddha and the two great Bodhisattvas completing his trinity, suggests forcibly a Byzantine mosaic in some Italian basilica. Shaka-Sakyamuni, wearing, contrary to custom, a most elaborate crown, is seated on a blue lotus floating in the air above a richly decked altar; to right and left of him are the Bodhisattvas, Monju on his lion and Fugen on his elephant. Below them, five on a side, are lesser Mahasattvas. The congregation, as we may call it, consists of holy personages, the four guardians of the universe and several demons, all standing, who form a hollow square before the altar, in the middle of which kneels in adoration a solitary, haloed, female figure with her back to us. Above in the air is a Swastika within a halo and two worshipping Tennin, or Buddhist

angels, who rain down heavenly flowers. Gray greens, reds and white predominate in the coloring, the garments, which are of the most elaborate T'ang fashion, are covered with patterns in gold, and every figure is loaded with the most magnificent jewels, crowns, girdles and necklaces in profusion.

Not so hieratic and gorgeous, but more charming, is the painting of the Kwanyin of Rain, who, standing on a pink, white-veined lotus-petal, sails over the waves, accompanied by his adoring child-attendant on another smaller petal. Kwanyin's body is bare to the waist and his flesh of a natural tint. Over his shoulders is a transparent black gauze scarf; his robes are white, with many fluttering scarves, and may have been patterned with gold. In his hair are flowers and jewels and he wears the usual jeweled girdles and pendants of a Bodhisattva, who in Indian and Chinese Buddhist art is generally bedecked like a great prince. These and his large ring halo are touched with gold. In his raised right hand he carries a now indistinguishable round object, probably the bottom of his holy-water jar; his left hand is down at his side and open in the canonical attitude of conferring blessings. In front of him a dragon rises from the waves. This picture was ascribed, by the tradition of the Japanese temple to which it formerly belonged, to Choshikyo of Sung, but would seem to be more correctly classed as it now is.

A Jizo, who is always represented as a Buddhist priest, is a far more mechanical work. The proportions are stumpy, the figure and the head in especial, wooden; the flesh is gilded and his red and black dress covered with patterns in gold in the style which we have noted as that of Choshikyo.

There is an Amida Trinity, interesting as being one of the few known Chinese examples of a subject which was immensely popular in Japan at about the same time and even rather earlier; another, curiously similar in style, is in the Kozloff Collection in the Alexander III Museum in Petrograd. Amida, attended by the Bodhisattvas, Kwanyin and Seishi, descends on clouds to welcome the believer to his Heaven in the West. He is surrounded by an aura of flames and clad in green, red and white, gold-patterned robes. Kwanyin carries a golden lotus throne for the redeemed soul. Despite the characteristic Yüan lack of delicacy in proportion, it is an impressive work.



Fig. 1. YÜAN: SHAKA PREACHING.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



Fig. 2. CH'U YING: THE HARP PLAYER.



There are other Yüan Buddhist paintings, but these are the most noteworthy.

A long roll in delicate ink outline by Wang Chên P'eng, fourteenth century, represents, it is said, Maya, the mother of the Buddha, but the subject is obscure. A queenly figure seated on a throne-like dais, holds on her lap a sprawling infant who clutches at her necklace with one hand and reaches out with the other for a peach which the queen holds in her left. Another child seems to flee from this group to one of the female attendants. The whole composition is overloaded with ornamental detail, but the line, though mostly mannered and lacking in freedom, is often of great delicacy and fineness. The artist was considered second only in this kind of work, which was called "white painting," to the great Li Lung-mien of Sung. There is another work by him, A Dragon Boat, in the Ching Hsien album, of this collection.

One of the great names of Yüan, Yen Hui, is possibly represented in the Boston collection. A painting of the Monk Miao K'o in Meditation is certainly in his style; a fiercely scowling Daruma-like person wrapped in a huge cloak, the ample composition and broad handling of which are very like the work of this master; but the whole garment is touched up and patterned in gold, which, if I mistake not, is not in his manner; possibly this adornment may have been added later. Yen Hui (fl. 1280-1330), at the very beginning of Yüan, should almost be considered a Sung painter.

Another example of this master's work has just been acquired by the Museum: a picture of the Taoist Rishi Han Shan (Japanese, Kanzan). His wind-tossed robes are girdled with oak-leaves; he holds the scroll book which is his attribute and he looks out with a drolly elfin gaze, a vision of almost girlish charm. This is an excellent piece of work and a probable ascription.

A painting of two horsemen, one in brown, the other in bright red, under a large tree, is "in the style of Chao Meng-fu," another of the great Yüan masters, but the phrase can surely only apply to his subject; the execution must be very inferior, if the artist deserved the great fame he enjoyed.

A dog "in the style of Mao Sung," who was an early Sung animal painter, must also refer to the subject and to the method in which every hair is rendered; the character of the animal, though fairly well understood, is far from showing the startling fidelity

to life of Mao Sung's Ape at Kyoto; still, it is a good school picture of Yüan times.

There are only two or three landscapes of this period in the collection. One by Yao Yen Ch'ing is in the early Sung style, recalling in some passages the great Li Chêng, of which I spoke in my last paper: a waterfall in a ravine, the toppling crags of which are very like those of the earlier painter; the trees, too, are in his manner or that of Fan K'uan, but the buildings are very flimsily and poorly drawn.

Another landscape, by Fang fang-hui, is so wild in handling as to suggest that it must be an early effort in Bunjir.ga or literary-man's painting, a form of art which seems to the uninitiated to aim at eschewing any technical accomplishment whatever. Like some of the modernists of to-day, its practitioners appear to have considered that they had "got beyond drawing."

A small picture, in the style of Ma Yüan, distantly suggests that great master, particularly in the subject and arrangement; the workmanship exhibits, however, the Yüan inferiority to the original.

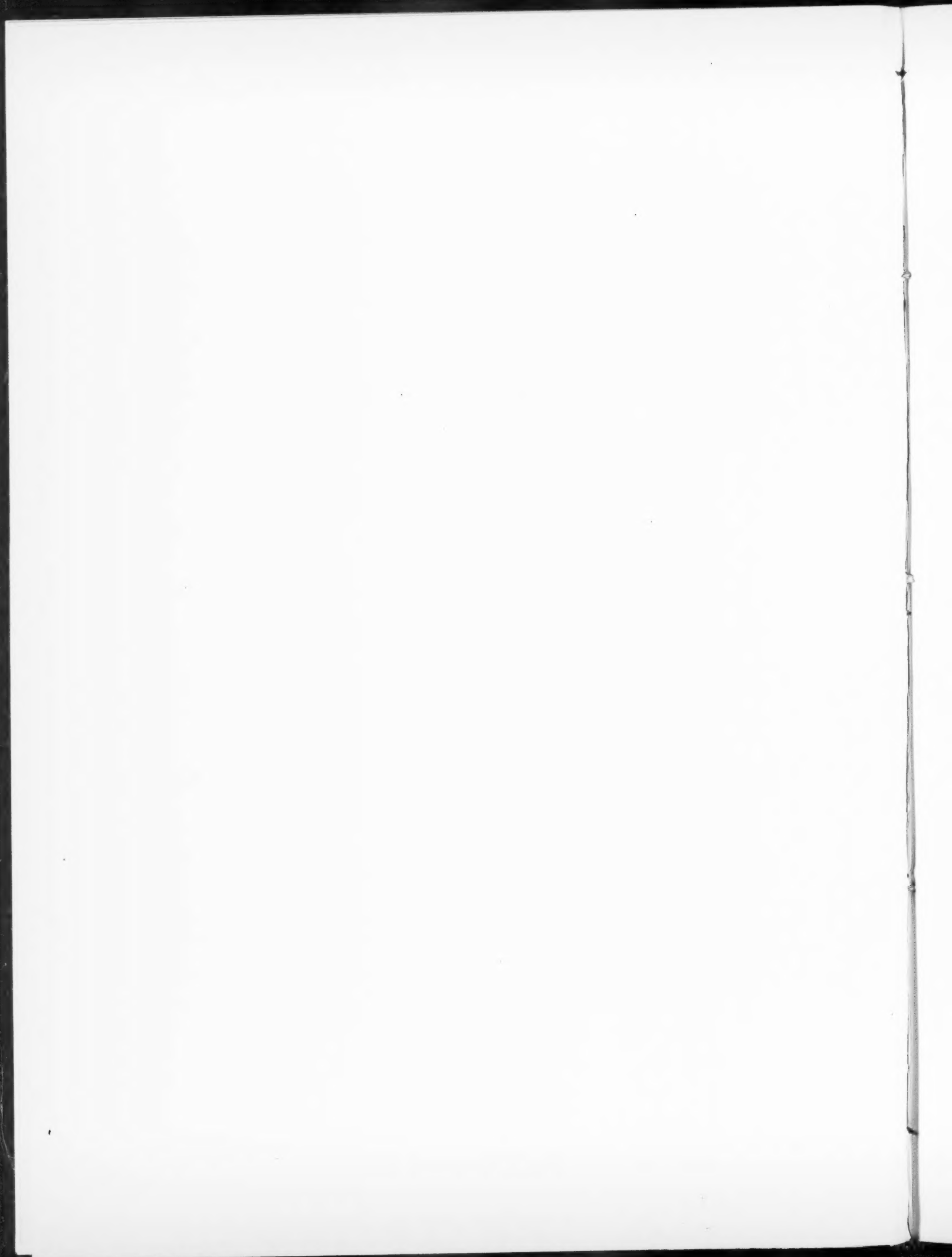
There are a few flower and bird paintings, one of which by Wu cheng huei, of bamboo shoots, in black ink, is a most skilful piece of work; another by Wang Yüan, representing Mandarin ducks and blossoming plum, has merit.

The next, the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 A.D.), was native Chinese, unlike the Mongol Yüan, and lasted three times as long as its foreign predecessor; it is, moreover, nearer to our day. We may, therefore, expect a greater number of works of art to have survived from this period. There are, however, fewer painters of distinction, and the art, on the whole, shows a continued degeneration. Nevertheless, there are paintings of this period of considerable charm and merit, and of such the Museum of Fine Arts is fortunate in possessing its share.

If all the paintings ascribed to him in the collections of the world had been painted by Ch'iu Ying (fl. c. 1530), he would have needed as many hands as the Thousand-armed Kwanyin to execute them. The Boston Museum is, therefore, to be congratulated in possessing one at least, *The Harp Player* (Fig. 2), which is asserted, by so high an authority as Okakura Kakuzo, to be so well authenticated as to constitute it a standard whereby this painter's work may be gauged. It is indeed a work of great beauty, instinct with



Fig. 3. BAMBOO AND DRAGON FLY (MING).
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



all the delicate feeling and exquisite manipulation that Chinese encomiums lead us to expect from this master, and even decadent in the very excess of these qualities, but this weakness some of us can forgive for the sake of its dainty charm.

A small thatched pavilion or tea house, with a blue awning carried on red posts, stands amid flowering shrubs, under a grove of pine trees, on the banks of a rushing brook, which bursts from the mountains close at hand. In it a venerable Sybarite meditatively listens to the music of a harp played by a lovely girl, while his own instrument lies close at hand. Two attendants are variously occupied. The predominant color is a pale, chalky gray blue of varying intensity with the greens and yellows of the natural objects and a note or two of rose in the dresses. Every detail is minutely rendered and the whole place is impossibly neat and exquisite. The harp is, so far as I know, the last appearance in a work of Chinese art of an instrument which made its first in a wall relief at Nineveh; thus demonstrating that it had been in continual use in Asia for 2500 years, testifying to the conservatism of that ancient continent.

Another painting ascribed to Ch'iu Ying is a good copy of a famous picture of his, Four Scholars Feasting in a Garden, which belongs to the temple Chionin in Kyoto. This example, though not the work of the master, and possibly of more than one hand, is soft in coloring and interesting as an old copy of a notable original.

A landscape Kakemono is possibly his, very delicately outlined in ink on paper but rather hard and empty. The same may be said of a small painting, in full color on silk, of a Tartar horseman riding a plunging steed, except that this instead of being empty is over elaborated. There are several other works ascribed to him, or in his style, in the Museum of Fine Arts, but these are the most important.

A very interesting painting because of its similarity to the works of the great Kano School, which began to flourish in Japan about this time, is by Liu Chun. It represents three Hsien (Japanese, Sennin) or men of the mountains, Taoist adepts whose similarity to the Buddhist Rakan has been already pointed out. One pipes while another executes a fantastic *pas-de-deux* with a huge three-legged toad, who is the familiar of one of them. All three are hilariously enjoying the pompous solemnity with which the

toad pirouettes on his one hind foot. It is broadly and vigorously painted in ink on paper with faint touches of color in the flesh and might almost be mistaken for the work of one of the great Kano men.

Wang ch'u as a Shepherd, showing the banished man watching a grazing flock, is soft in handling with considerable variety of tone, but on the whole below the Sung standard.

Ming landscape re-echoes with increasing faintness the great notes of Kuo Hsi and Ma Yüan of Sung.

The depth of the descent from this high plane could not be better shown than it has been here, by the hanging of a large Kake-mono, of Ming time, in the style of Ma Yüan, on the same wall with that master's great painting described in my last paper, and the even finer Hsia Kuei. Apart from these, the Ming painting, meritorious in many ways, might hold its own, but side by side with such masterpieces it looks both coarse and weak. This is equally true of several other landscapes of this dynasty in the Museum collection.

There are three Ming paintings of Rakan of fine character, one in especial like a good portrait of a Buddhist priest—soft yet brilliant in coloring and detail, but somewhat overwrought. This is also true of a blue-faced warrior Taoist God.

The taste of this period ran strongly in the direction of bird and flower painting, in which several of its masters excelled. Among others, there is in the Boston Museum a little fifteenth century picture of a black-winged dragonfly perched on the tip of a spray of yellowing bamboo, all the size of life, which is as admirable in its way as if it were the work of a Sung artist (Fig. 3). A great eagle in black and white, called by Fenollosa, who ascribed it to a contemporaneous Japanese painter Kano Utanosuke (1514-75), the Buddha of Eagles, is another testimonial to the power and facility of the Ming painters in this kind. It is perhaps by Liu Lang.

The Museum owns about fifty paintings by artists of the Ch'ing Dynasty (1644-1911), but as this is not an historical treatise, merely a guide to the paintings of greatest interest in the collection, we may briefly note that none of them is of the first importance.

The Museum has made a point of collecting Lamaistic paintings and has perhaps a larger and more representative collection of these than any other similar institution. They are some of them Sino-

Tibetan and some purely Tibetan, though perhaps the first term might be applied to them all, Tibetan art, as we know it, being but an offshoot of Chinese.

The earliest specimens cannot well be earlier than Yüan, the first ruler of which dynasty, Kublai Khan, instituted the Dalai Lamaism and made this branch of Buddhism his state religion in 1261. The best of these Lamaistic paintings will hold their own with the religious work of Yüan and Ming, having often a strange beauty suggestive of that of the mediæval illuminated manuscripts of Europe.

THE PATTERN OF CHINESE ANIMALS IN A LANDSCAPE AND ANIMAL RUG IN THE WILLIAMS MEMORIAL COLLECTION · BY RUDOLF MEYER RIEFSTAHL

THE great Animal rug in the Joseph Lee Williams Memorial Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (Fig. 1) belongs to a particularly interesting type of composition, which was unfamiliar to Mohammadan art before the Mongol conquest and which can be traced back very directly to the great wave of Chinese influence sweeping over all the Nearer East after the second half of the thirteenth century.

Neither Mongols nor Mohammadans understood the deep philosophical meaning of Chinese landscape painting or the pantheistic conception of nature, which their Chinese masters felt under the spell of Buddhistic and Taoistic philosophy, but they felt intensely attracted by the decorative motives and the color combinations of the Chinese, and the Persians particularly found in Chinese art a possibility of expressing in forms and colors the idyllic enjoyment of trees, meadows, gardens, flowers and singing birds which was the favorite motive of their poets since the days of Firdusi, Saadi and Hafiz.

The first influence of Chinese art is felt in manuscripts of the latest decade of the thirteenth century, like the famous Manafi al Hayawan in the Morgan Library, dated 1291, in the decorations of the mosque of Veramin, constructed about 1322, in the potteries generally ascribed to Sultanabad and in the textiles of the early fourteenth century. It appears in a more refined form in the following century, during the Timuride period. Manuscripts like the Khwaju

Kirmani, dated 1396, in the British Museum or miniatures like the charming group of women in a garden in the Musée des Arts décoratifs in Paris, represent the later form of this style in Mohammadan art.

The Persians never had a school of landscape painting like the Chinese, but for decorative purposes they created among many others one particularly interesting type of decoration, which combined elements of Chinese landscape composition with the fantastic Chinese Kilin animals (the lion, the panther, the leopard, the stag, with flames flaring up from shoulders and hips). In such compositions we find all these animals running and hunting one another in a lovely forest with blossoming trees. We find even the Chinese dragon and phoenix fighting together. Many minor motives prove also that these free landscape compositions were created under a strong Chinese inspiration, although identical scenes do not exist in Chinese art and although single motives, like the fighting animals, belong to the old stock of Sassanian art. The Chinese inspiration is evident in the tendency towards asymmetry and free composition, in the graceful and in the harmonious lines of the detail, which are not found in Mohammadan art of the Abbasside period.

This decoration of "hunting and running Chinese animals in a landscape," as we may define it, was used from the second half of the fourteenth century until the decay of Persian art in the seventeenth century; it had been in fashion for rugs, textiles, decorative book-paintings, bookbindings in stamped leather, lacquer painting and other branches of decorative art. It changed very little from its first appearance until the time of Behzad (died about 1525). During this time it shows a charming direct inspiration from nature combined with a wonderful spirit for sober and refined composition. In the period of the painter Sultan Mohammad (ab. 1525-1560) it becomes more decorative and elaborate and loses its intimate charm, but this somewhat sophisticated art, which we may compare to that of the High Renaissance, is still of great beauty and certainly of extraordinary refinement. In the period of the painter Riza Abbassi (ab. 1560-1625) it becomes superficial and calligraphic, pretentious and overrich. It is unnecessary to speak of the later period of decadence. We have intentionally divided the different periods after artists and not after rulers, as the same artists who were known as painters inspired all other branches of decorative art.

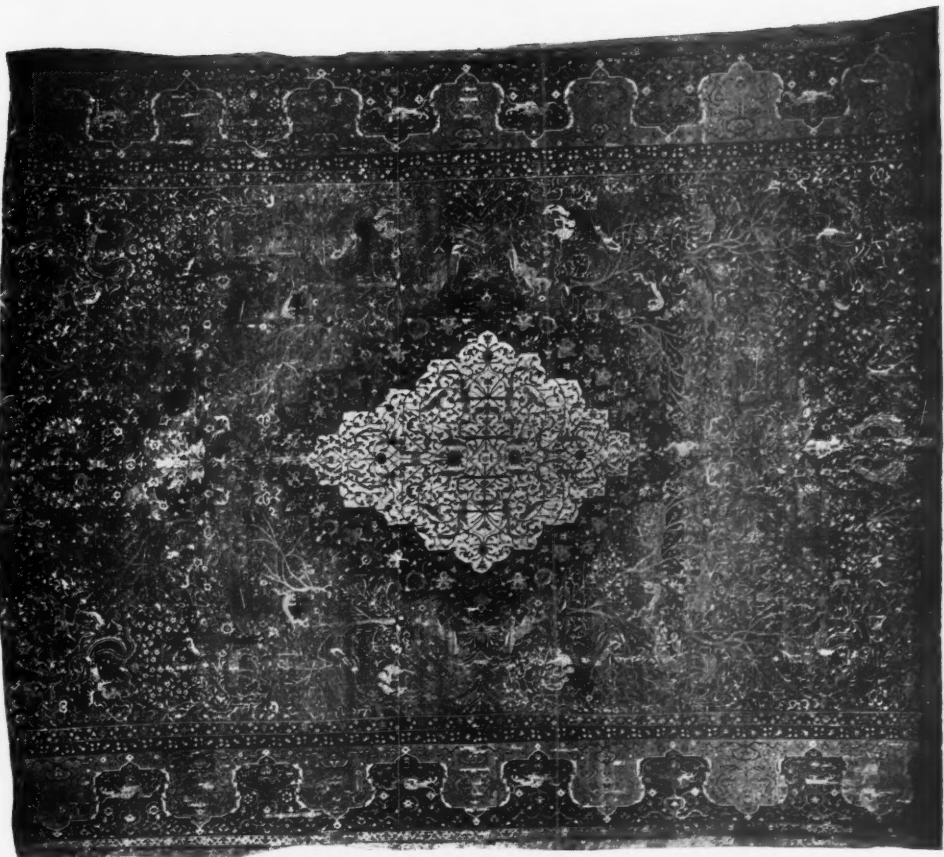


Fig. 1. PERSIAN ANIMAL RUG OF THE LATE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.
Joseph Lee Williams Memorial Collection.

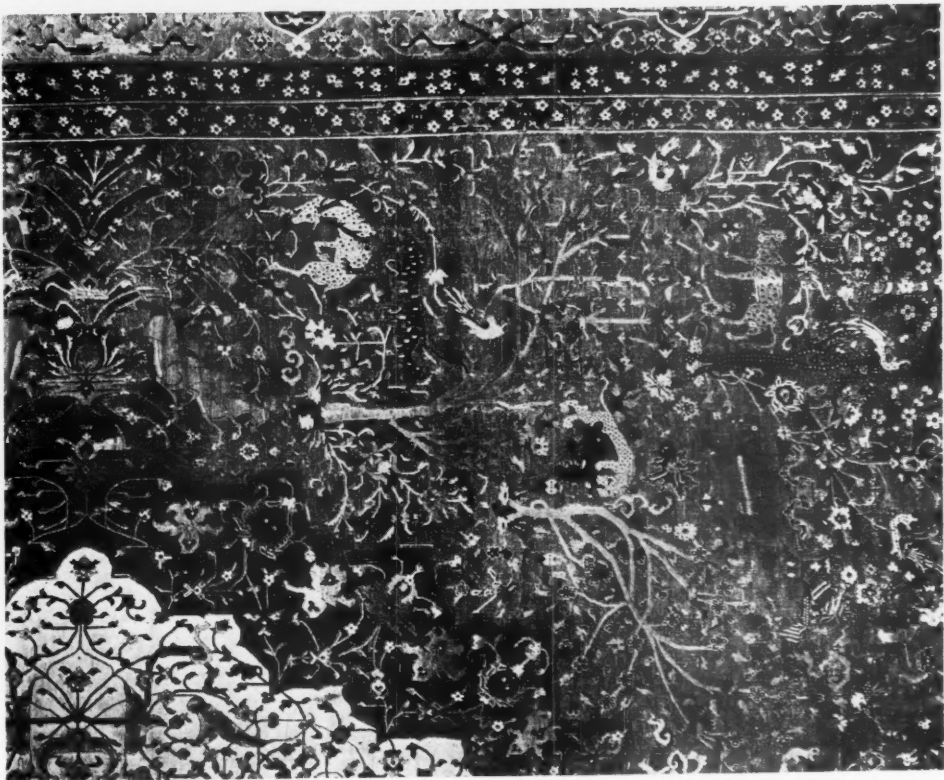
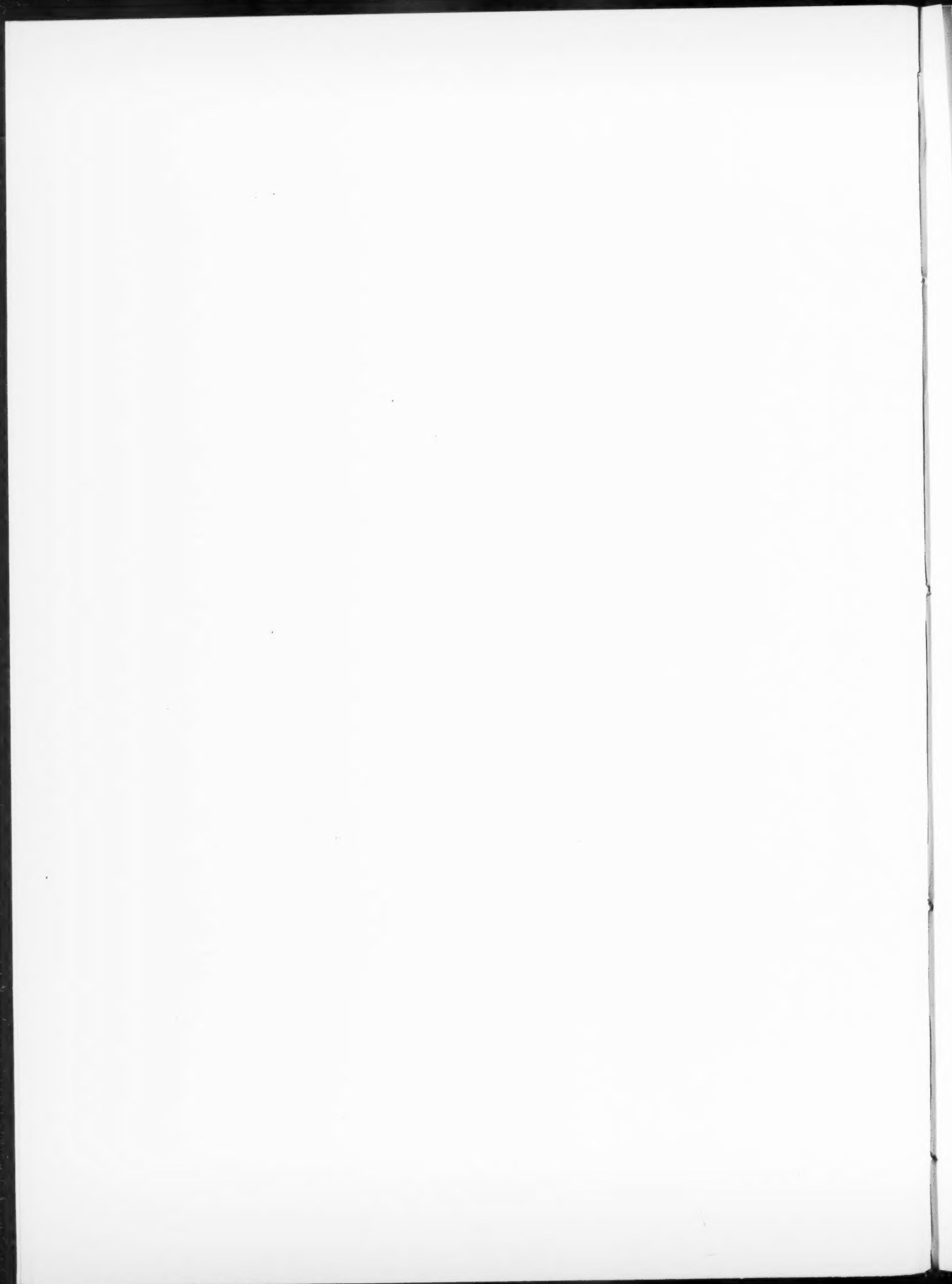


Fig. 2. DETAIL OF THE SAME RUG.



The Williams rug at the Metropolitan Museum is the finest and perhaps the earliest representative of this type of decoration in the field of knotted rugs. It may be worth while to study briefly the evolution of this type during the Timuride period and to compare the design of the Williams rug with other contemporaneous decorative work.

Elements of this type are already found in the charming animal compositions of the Sultanabad potteries and on certain luster tiles, which must belong to the earlier fourteenth century (see specimens at the Metropolitan Museum).

The earliest example of the "hunting and running Chinese animals in a landscape" is found in a miniature of the above-mentioned manuscript of Khwaju Kirmani, written towards 1396 (reprod. Martin, "Miniature Painting," Vol. II, Pl. 45). It is a lovely garden scene, in which a prince is represented sitting on a throne. The front part of the throne is covered with a decoration of which we cannot tell whether it is rug knotting, tapestry weave, embroidery or even lacquer painting. It is most probably a textile fabric. The type of composition is exactly the same as that of the Williams rug: a sky with Chinese clouds, flying ducks and cranes, a charming landscape with blossoming almond trees, rocks, flowers and gazelles, and in the foreground the little waves of a brook with swimming ducks.

Other specimens of this pattern are found in the book paintings during the whole fifteenth century; with only slight modifications, it was still in favor at the time of Behzad. Among its finest representatives are the wonderful borders, painted in silver and gold of several shades, which come from a manuscript of the Bostan of Saadi, formerly in the Schulz Collection in Leipzig. This precious book has now been split up and pages of it are found at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, in the Sarre Collection at the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin, in the B. Berenson Collection, Florence, etc. The text was written by the famous calligrapher Sultan Ali Meschedi, who died in 1513, and we have no reason to believe that the borders are of a later period. In these beautiful borders we have the finest application to book art of this Chinese style of free landscape decoration. The majority of the pages show the indication of landscapes with hills and meadows, shadowed by trees with pomegranates and

silvery almond flowers; in some of them we find figural composition, like the beautiful page with angels in the Berenson Collection or some pages of the Metropolitan Museum of Art; on others we find running and fighting animals, in a free composition of trees and flowers, exactly as on the animal rugs of the late fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries.¹

The same type of composition is found in later manuscripts; for instance, in a very fine Nizami in the British Museum (Or. 2265) written for Schah Thamasp and dated A.D. 1539 to 1542 (see Martin, "Miniatures," II, Pl. 252-254). It was also employed for bookbindings in stamped leather or lacquer painting. Very charming specimens of such bookbindings are in the collection of Henri d'Allemagne, Paris (see Migeon, "Exposition des Arts musulmans," Paris, 1903, Pl. 100); another in the Peytel Collection, Paris (Migeon, "Exp. Mus.," Pl. 104). A magnificent specimen of the same technique but of later period belongs to a Schahnameh of the seventeenth century in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fig. 4). The binding is, perhaps, of earlier period than the manuscript.

In the late sixteenth century this type of composition becomes more and more conventional and calligraphic; it loses its fine balance and becomes generally too rich and crowded (see Martin, "Miniatures," II, Pl. 255). Other decorations, like the flower patterns with huge curved feather leaves, seem to be more in favor.

The pattern of "hunting and running Chinese animals in a landscape" was also employed by the artists who designed cartoons for the rugs. We do not know when it was introduced for this purpose, but it appeared very likely at the same period as in the other branches of decorative art. But there is one fundamental difference between the book-decorations and bookbindings; in the Persian rugs a strictly symmetrical composition is the rule, the same pattern being repeated four times, to the left and to the right, in the upper and in the lower part of the composition. Only in the Indian rugs of the late sixteenth century an asymmetrical free composition is observed. (The finest Indian specimens are in the Commercial Museum in Vienna (Vienna, Pl. 1) and in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.)

The Animal rug of the Williams Collection is perhaps the

¹ See Fig. 3. Other typical examples are reproduced: Martin, "Miniatures," Vol. II, Pl. 250, 251. Marteau-Véver, "Miniatures persanes," Pl. 27, 78. Schulz, "Miniaturmalerei," Pp. 68-71, 73, 121, 122. The photographs obtainable of the Metropolitan Museum pieces are, with two exceptions, not good.



Fig. 3. PAGE OF A MANUSCRIPT OF THE BOSTAN
BY SAADI; CALLIGRAPHY BY SULTAN
ALI MESCHEDI.
About A.D. 1500.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Fig. 4. BOOKBINDING IN STAMPED
AND GILT LEATHER.
Persia. Late Sixteenth Century.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Fig. 5. BORDER OF THE PERSIAN ANIMAL RUG.
Joseph Lee Williams Memorial Collection.



finest and earliest existing specimen of this type. It is however imperfect, the upper and lower part of the rug being cut off. As it is, it measures 16 ft. 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (510 cm.) x 15 ft. 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (464 cm.). The warps of the rug are of cotton, dyed copper blue. Between the rows of knots we find three wefts, two of natural brown wool, one of cotton. The knotting is done in wool. There are about 270 knots to a square inch. The number of colors employed is extremely limited; we have counted white, black, dark blue, light blue, dark green (for the background of the rug), light green, salmon red, crimson and buff.

The border consists of a main border and of two small strips with flower ornamentation inside and outside of the main border. The main border shows a pattern which is rather rare and characteristic of the earlier period. Curved Chinese cloud ribbons divide it in a series of compartments alternately dark red and salmon. In each of the compartments we find on a background of floral scrollwork different motives which are repeated: a group of peacocks in opposite representation, a leopard attacking a gazelle, and a Chinese phoenix fighting with a Chinese dragon. All this is of very fine and simple design and of perfect proportion. We find similar borders in the beautiful Animal rug at the Victoria and Albert Museums, London (Vienna Suppl., Pl. 23), on the Schwarzenberg Garden rug (Vienna, Pl. 31), and in a fragment of rug in the National Museum in Stockholm (Martin, "Carpets," Fig. 90). The border of the South Kensington rug is practically identical and shows also the fight between dragon and phoenix, and the leopard attacking the gazelle.

The field of the rug shows a huge center medallion with attached side medallions; the white center field is decorated with very fine arabesques and star flower scrollwork. In the outer part (dark red) of the center medallions we find huge arabesque flowers and other flowers, the centers of which are filled with lion heads; in the side medallions are charming groups of two peacocks in symmetrical representation. We do not know if quarters of the center medallions were repeated in the four corners of the rug, but this seems not very likely. The field itself shows on green background a very charming and poetical landscape with blossoming flowers and trees which would be a perfect paradise if the different animals represented were not struggling one against the other. Pheasants with

long waving tails, quails and parrots move about the branches of the trees. A panther attacks the graceful stag, a bear and a leopard are beginning a fearful fight, a young bull is not aware of the lion crawling towards him, and wild donkeys are galloping over the meadow as spiritedly as the horses of Kublai Khan in the Chinese paintings of the Yüan period.

In the whole composition we find the utmost simplicity combined with an extraordinarily expressive design. There is a true feeling of nature, and a real atmosphere in this rug. There are but very few rugs in which we find this motive interpreted with such simplicity and refinement: the Garden rug belonging to Prince Schwarzenberg in Vienna, the Animal rug of the South Kensington, and the Animal rug of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum (Vienna, Pl. 57) and the Garden rug in the Figdor Collection in Vienna (Munich Exh., Pl. 54), belong to the same early period. All these rugs are beautiful emanations of the same spirit, which gives such extraordinary charm and life to the paintings of the master Behzad. In this whole group of early rugs, the Williams rug is certainly not the most perfect or the most pleasant one, but in point of artistic conception and beauty of design it may be considered the masterpiece of the series. The date of the rug must be within A.D. 1470 to 1525, the period of Behzad.

The pattern of "hunting and running Chinese animals in a landscape" was employed for rugs during the whole sixteenth century. But in the later rugs the groups of animals take the prominent part in the composition, and trees and flowers become a mere accessory of minor importance. A typical example of this later phase is a rug in the Altman Collection, which was published in *ART IN AMERICA* of April, 1916.

Books consulted: F. R. MARTIN, *History of Oriental Carpets before 1800*, Vienna, 1908 (quoted as "Martin, Carpets"). *ORIENTALISCHE TEPPICHE* herausgegeben vom K. K. Handelsministerium in Wien, Vienna, 1892-1896 (quoted as "Vienna"). F. SARRE, *Altorientalische Teppiche*, Leipzig, 1907 (supplement to the Vienna publication, quoted as "Vienna Suppl."). A. MIGEON, *Exposition des Arts musulmans au Musée des Arts décoratifs*, Paris, 1903. F. R. MARTIN, *The Miniature Painting and Painters of Persia, India and Turkey*, London, 1912. G. MARTEAU et HENRI VÉVER, *Exposition de Miniatures persanes au Musée des Arts décoratifs*, Paris, 1912. Ph. W. SCHULZ, *Die persisch-islamische Miniaturmalerei*, Leipzig, 1914.

Concerning the Williams rug, see: *Munich Mohammadan Exhibition*, 1910, catalogue No. 5. Vienna Suppl., Pl. 13. Martin, Carpets, Fig. 91.

A MUSICAL PARTY BY PIETER DE HOOCH · BY
MAURICE W. BROCKWELL

FOR over fifty years nothing seems to have been known of the whereabouts of the fine Musical Party by Pieter de Hooch which has just passed into the collection of Mr. John N. Willys of Toledo. The scene is represented, on a canvas measuring 24 by 27½ inches, in a lofty and spacious apartment sumptuously furnished and paved with large square tiles of black and white marble.

The first record of the picture is its description in 1842 (No. 71) in the "Catalogue of the Gallery of Pictures collected by Edmund Higginson of Saltmarshe," in which it was justly claimed that in this picture was shown "the characteristic excellence of the master in his introduction of sun-shine effect." When sold out of that collection at Christie's four years later, one critic wrote that "Mr. Higginson, of Saltmarshe, Herefordshire, some years ago became what we may complimentarily call a rapacious accumulator of pictures, clutching every masterpiece within his grasp—the dreaded antagonist of other picture-gluttons in the market; his purse, a fisherman's trawl which netted its lustrous objects rather by the shoal than the dozen. This collection would have done any citizen's taste much credit; five of the pictures alone brought upwards of £10,000, and the pictorial stock altogether brought about 44,000 guineas." These were large sums for those times. Known to Smith ("Cat. Raisonné," Supp., p. 572, No. 28), it next appeared at Christie's on May 6, 1863, (No. 64) in the sale of "the choice collection of that well-known amateur Mr. G. H. Morland," when it was described as the Interior of an Apartment. (This G. H. Morland, by the way, seems to have been in no way related to the painters George and H. R. Morland, as Dr. Hofstede de Groot implies in his *Verzeichniss der Werke holländischer Maler*, Vol. I, p. 518, No. 161.)

Our Musical Party has various points of contact with other works of the same hand, notably with the "Interior" of the Louvre. Thus the young lady in the foreground of our composition is to be identified with the one holding cards in her hand in the other. Again, the pair conversing and the boy with the water-bottle, in the background of each, are very much alike. Certain similarities are

also seen in another, larger, and more crowded composition of the same subject which has been "lost" for over sixty years but hangs and is duly respected in the dining-room of a small collector in Yorkshire. The tent-bed occurs also in pictures at Berlin and Nuremberg. The plumed hat, so decoratively displayed on the table, recalls that worn by the man who stands, in the Game of Cards, of 1658, at Buckingham Palace, which shows great skill in chiaroscuro and the different effects of sunshine in the room, as well as in the cross lights reflected from the sunlit wall and the checkered marble floor. The young man seated, with his hat on his knee, in the Interior of a Dutch House, in the National Gallery, will be recalled by all who see this picture. Again, the young lady, seated and raising her hand, occurs in the Music Party on a Terrace of the former Borden Collection, the group of figures in which is found also in the Garden Scene at Buckingham Palace.

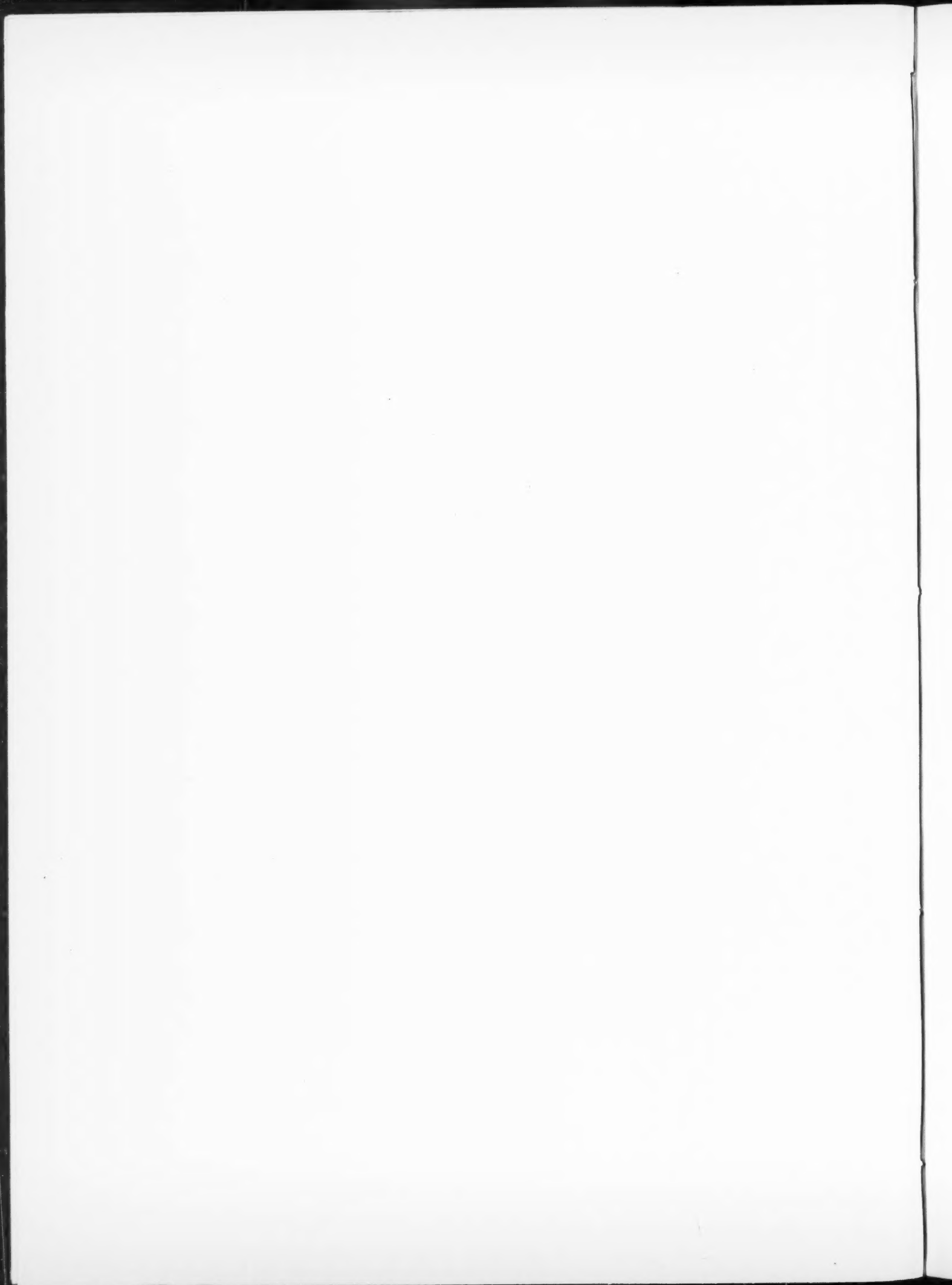
Pentimenti, or erasures, are not altogether unknown in the pictures by this artist. For in the early stages of executing his Interior of a Dutch House, in the National Gallery, he painted in a fifth figure whom he placed just in front and to the spectator's left of the maid carrying a pan of burning charcoal. It is still possible to detect in it the outline of a man with long hair in profile to the right. And, so far as my memory serves me, it is actually he who in an equally large hat is met with again here.

In the whole range of Netherlandish painting the earliest domestic "Interior" is that which, in the hands of John van Eyck in 1434, represents the worldly importance of John Arnolfini and his wife and at one time hung in the lavatory of a royal palace in Spain. Exactly a century later Holbein, in his Ambassadors, created no illusion in his interior with its conglomeration of mathematical, astronomical and musical instruments, all veraciously rendered but useless in the composition of the whole, which might, so far as the human figures are concerned, be cut down the center to make two separate portraits. It remained for Vermeer and Pieter de Hooch to paint Holland, its light, its interiors and its conversation-pieces.

It is, of course, not by chance that these attractive creatures and material objects are scattered about our composition. Obviously the outstanding feature is the young lady who is both the intellectual and the aesthetic center of the well-balanced and composite whole.



PIETER DE HOOCH: A MUSICAL PARTY.
Collection of Mr. John N. Willys, Toledo.



The sentiment all through is essentially Dutch and human, and the bearing of the figures dignified. We could not with advantage add or remove one figure or a single accessory. De Hooch's brushwork is often inferior to that of Frans Hals, that "master of the brush" who was his countryman and his senior. But if De Hooch lacked in that respect, he had a greater gift of observation and a more deliberately objective sense. He did not possess the imagination of Rembrandt, but he is from a popular standpoint much more pictorial. Thus he employs the attitudes of his figures as factors in the general effect of mass, line and color, even though he did not lay special emphasis on their thoughts and emotions. Rembrandt in his "Interiors"—and his masterpiece among those on a small scale is certainly the Christ at Emmaus of the Louvre—used light to illuminate the faces from one side. But De Hooch has employed it to reveal a less exalted, if more popularly attractive, theme in the complete environment of a well-lit conversation-piece. In rendering the full beauty of sunlight and color such as the external appearance of his figures afforded, he has given every tone its full value, every line its considered significance. The sense of mass is conveyed by the tent-bed, but is negatived in great part by the superb drawing of the table; the wall at the back would be too high, were it not for the ample glazing of the windows and the mathematical accuracy of their leadings. The lines of the figures—now round, now flowing—offset the innumerable lines of the floor, while the spacious measurement of the tiled surface is broken up by the effective pattern of the nails which stud the front of the door. The interplay of the horizontal and vertical lines is apt to make us overlook the fact that the room is one of the largest rendered by this great Dutch painter. The glint of the sun on the iron railing outside makes the view of the ornamental garden less abrupt and invites us without more ado to step out into the light of day.

Many critics have written of the refining influence of Vermeer on Pieter de Hooch at Delft, and by the time that this work was achieved, the latter must have been so affected for quite a decade. The lighting of our canvas is perhaps not so suffused as in the works of the great "color-magician" who, on the contrary, could not have marshaled so many figures to produce so fine a composition. Yet De Hooch was not primarily concerned with the intellectual

or moral outlook on life of those he rendered so attractively; nor was he specially interested in the human face.

There cannot be more than a score of paintings by De Hooch that bear a date, and the present one is neither signed nor dated. Yet it is absolutely autograph. The style justifies us in placing it later in date than the three outstanding works at Trafalgar Square. It is known that, on the death of his wife in 1667, our artist removed from Delft to Amsterdam. And we may without much doubt regard this Musical Party as one of the latest achievements of his Delft period or, more probably, as one of his very earliest at Amsterdam. A close examination of the canvas, which we know only from a photograph, would decide the point. De Hooch, who might be called the typical Dutch painter of *le voulu*—that which he deliberately determined and set out to represent—might almost be described, if we did not actually know his name, as "*le maître de la porte ouverte*." Having deliberately visualized such a scene as this, he gives to it the full feeling of verisimilitude. After all, painting is an attempt to render objects of three dimensions in the terms of two, and is therefore merely a deception.

But how fascinating a study!

TWO ITALIAN MADONNAS · BY PHILA CALDER NYE

LATE in 1916 there were brought to this country, among other examples of Italian art, two polychrome wooden statues of the Madonna. One has been acquired by Mrs. W. L. Davis of New York City, and the other by the Princeton Museum. These two examples furnish an interesting study of different periods in the history of wooden statues in Italy.

The older of the two is the standing Madonna now in the possession of Mrs. Davis (Fig. 1). The Mother holds the entirely nude Child upon her right arm, while her left hand lightly touches one foot of the little figure. Her mantle, which falls in simple folds from her head to the hem of her robe, is caught up over her left arm and drawn across her breast in soft parallel folds, the ends falling from under her right arm. The statue is about half life-size. In color the prevailing tone is gold, the mantle being markedly distinguished from the robe by its blue lining. An interesting and



Fig. 1. MADONNA AND CHILD (Wood). XVTH CENTURY, UMBRIAN.
Property of Mrs. W. L. Dacis, New York City.

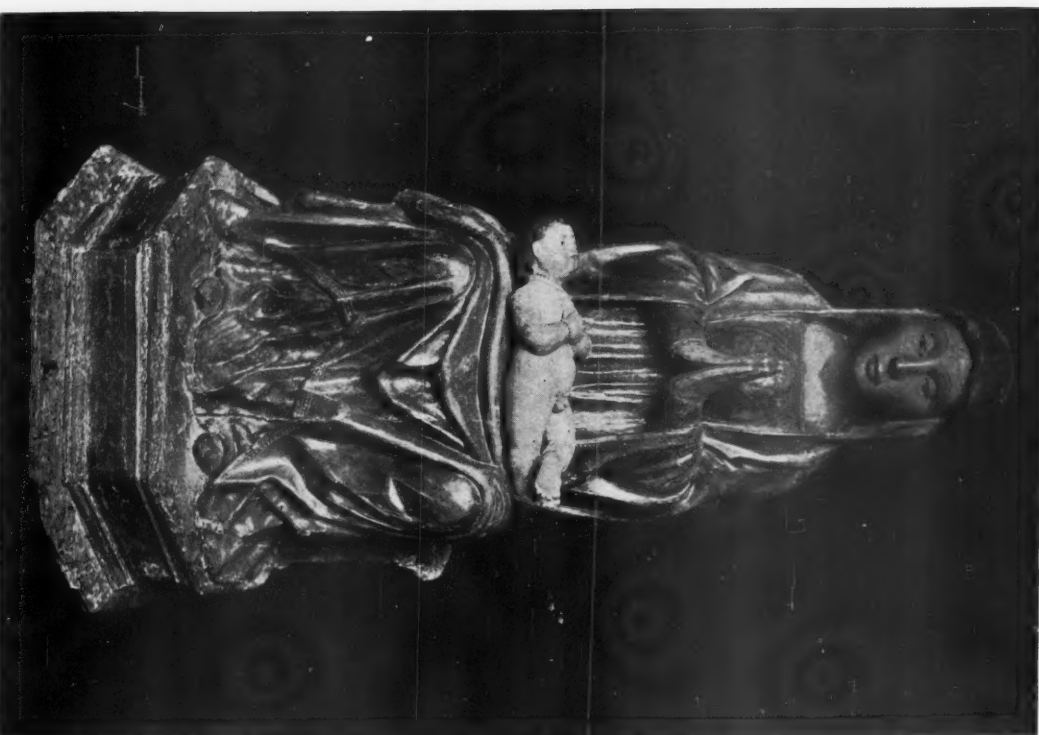


Fig. 2. MADONNA AND CHILD (Wood). XVTH CENTURY, LOMBARD.
The Princeton Art Museum.



curious effect is produced by the wearing down of the gold, which overlays a priming of red, which in turn seems to have been laid over a coating of blue applied directly to the thin layer of plaster. The wearing off of the upper layers has given the effect of a pattern on the draperies, but a close inspection does not disclose any real design. The hem of the robe falls closely around the feet, so that only the pointed toes of the shoes can be seen. The flesh is painted in soft pleasing tones. The hair of the Child is a light yellow, and that around the face of the Mother is also light in tone.

The Madonna is very thin through the chest, a trait common to examples of fourteenth century work. Her strongly marked oval face, and the square shoulders of both Mother and Child, help us to class the sculptor as Umbrian. We would add, however, that an undraped Child does not occur in examples of Italian art until late in the fourteenth century, mainly in the last decade; also that a strong Tuscan influence is recognizable in the arrangement of the draperies, which may be accounted for by the intercourse between the two schools.

The Princeton example (Fig. 2) shows the Madonna seated upon a bench, with the Child lying across her knees. The Mother's hands are clasped, leaving the Child wholly exposed to view. She sits, with apparently little care for the safety of the Child, absorbed in contemplation, her eyelids drooped in an attitude suggestive of prayer. As in the older example just described, the main color note in this statue is a rich gold alike in robe and mantle. But here the robe is easily distinguished because of its decoration, a conventional flower pattern in dull red outline upon a background marked by tiny dots pressed into the plaster when still soft. The mantle is uniformly of gold, except the lining, which is a dull blue in the upper part, whereas the lower part is of the same shade of red used in the decoration of the dress. The same simple border decorates both dress and mantle, being made up of three lines of dots pressed into the plaster, the inner line much larger than the two which confine it. The shoes are of the red used elsewhere in the work. The Child is entirely nude, with a double string of red beads painted as a necklace, and single strings for bracelets. The flesh tints here are darker than in the Davis statue, and the hair of both Mother and Child is dark. A contrasting note of color is seen in the handling of the bench, which is of a severely simple

design, dull green in color, somewhat reminiscent of the patina on bronzes. The only decoration is a series of patterns composed of yellow interlacing lines, and a diamond-shaped lozenge on the front of the polygonal base enclosing the letters I. H. S. The simplicity, dignity and purity of the composition make it a particularly pleasing example of this branch of the sculptor's art.

We have here an interesting question as to both date and authorship. It came to us with the tentative date of the fifteenth century, carved under the inspiration of Boccati, which would place it as a work from the Marches. But upon examining very closely the works of Boccati, except for the pose, we find no real likeness in the treatment. In the first place, Boccati prefers a round, almost childlike face, slender neck, square shoulders, and draperies in broad folds—all quite foreign to the type of this Madonna. Perhaps a study of the points of the statue in question will yield some interesting developments.

I. Position: While this pose cannot be called unusual, it certainly is not a common one. It only came into vogue during the fifteenth century. Before this the child was held in the arms, a pose which continued throughout the whole history of Italian art. In the successive stages the child develops from a small man into a puppet, and finally into a real baby who needs the mother's protecting arm to guard it. In the fifteenth century and later the mother often holds the child upright upon her knee, or on a parapet. Occasionally the child is placed upon a parapet in a recumbent or a sitting position, but in all cases the mother is careful for his safety, and holds him, or else he is grasping her arm or a portion of her drapery. Early in the fifteenth century the fashion crept in of letting the baby lie unguarded upon the mother's knee. This may have arisen from the Nativity groups, in which the child was often placed upon the ground, the mother bending or kneeling over him in an attitude of adoration. The detached manner of the mother in this statue is marked; it is more akin to the pose seen in the Assumption of the Virgin. Were it not for the fact that the statue is made so that the babe fits into a prepared place on the Madonna's lap, one might suppose that the little figure was added later. Certainly the only suggestion we have of her consciousness of the presence of the child is found in her drooping lids. This pose, we note, was popular with the artists of northern and central Italy.

II. Type: The strong oval face with high cheekbones, broad forehead, straight nose, arched brows, small mouth, and firm, small chin is rare in southern and central Italy, but in the north is not uncommon. It is noticeable in the Lorenzo Costa portrait of Isabella d'Este; in a Madonna of the Lombard school in the Platt collection at Englewood, N. J.; and, finally, in the paintings of Butinone of the Milanese school.

III. Draperies: Here we find much similarity to the work of the Tuscan school, especially in the handling of folds across the knees; but in the paintings of Butinone the dress is exactly similar, even to the twisted girdle about the waist. The decorative pattern on the Madonna's dress is one in vogue with the north Italian artists of the late fifteenth century.

IV. Throne and decorations: This severely simple type of throne was used by Cola d'Amatrice, a follower of Crivelli in the Marches. But the decorations of the base and sides are interestingly like the interlacings known as the Da Vinci knots.

Hence the statue seems to be the work of a Lombard master of the late fifteenth century, who may have either worked under a Tuscan master, or have been in Tuscany, where these wooden statues were being produced in greater numbers than in other parts of Italy.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of ART IN AMERICA.

SIR: With reference to the article, *Two German Tapestries after Michael Wolgemuth*, by Rudolf Meyer Riefstahl, in your June number, may I be allowed to point out that the connexion between the design of the second of these hangings and Schedel's 'Nuremberg Chronicle' (1493) was established by Mr. Campbell Dodgson of the British Museum, in a letter to the *Burlington Magazine* for December, 1907 (xii, 164).

It is a pity that, whilst he is rather hard (perhaps not unjustly so) upon the treatment "C. H. W." accorded to the subject in his article in the same magazine for November, 1907 (xii, 101), Mr. Meyer Riefstahl failed to notice Mr. Dodgson's brief but pithy note. It furnished not only proof of the connexion between a Wolgemuth cut and a tapestry, but also a very probable solution of the enigmatic coat-of-arms (per bend Wurzburg and Franconia) so strangely located at the foot of "Palatinus Reni."

Moreover, when Mr. Riefstahl discerns in the tapestry in question a work that meets, as regards the artist in question, the requirements of the problem he

cites from Monsieur J. J. Guiffrey ". . . evidence that Wolgemuth, Dürer and Holbein were asked to work for the tapestry weavers," I think he goes rather too far.

His own, immediately following, remarks seem to confuse the point at issue: "Guiffrey's observation was right: an undisputable connection of German tapestry art with the work of one of these masters has not yet been proved. We have succeeded in furnishing this proof at least for Michael Wolgemuth, the master of Dürer. We have found two German tapestries which are exact copies of works of Wolgemuth," etc., etc., etc.

The point surely is, to prove that Wolgemuth designed or worked for the weaver; not that a certain tapestry reproduces (more or less exactly) a book-illustration by that artist.

Speaking of the date (1493) of Schedel's Chronicle as evidence for the making of this tapestry, Mr. Campbell Dodgson says (*op. cit.*) and with true critical acumen: "How much later it should be dated I will not venture to decide, but it presumably still falls within the period in which plagiarism from Wolgemuth would be considered as allowable as it was convenient. But plagiarism, to be successful, needed more knowledge and discretion than the designer of the tapestry possessed. He had a very simple task when he conveyed the central group with the brocade pattern and inscriptions direct from the woodcut on fol. 267 verso, a woodcut copied from Schongauer's engraving, B. 71."

I submit that this is not a case of Wolgemuth (or Schongauer)'s collaboration with the weaver. I am, sir,

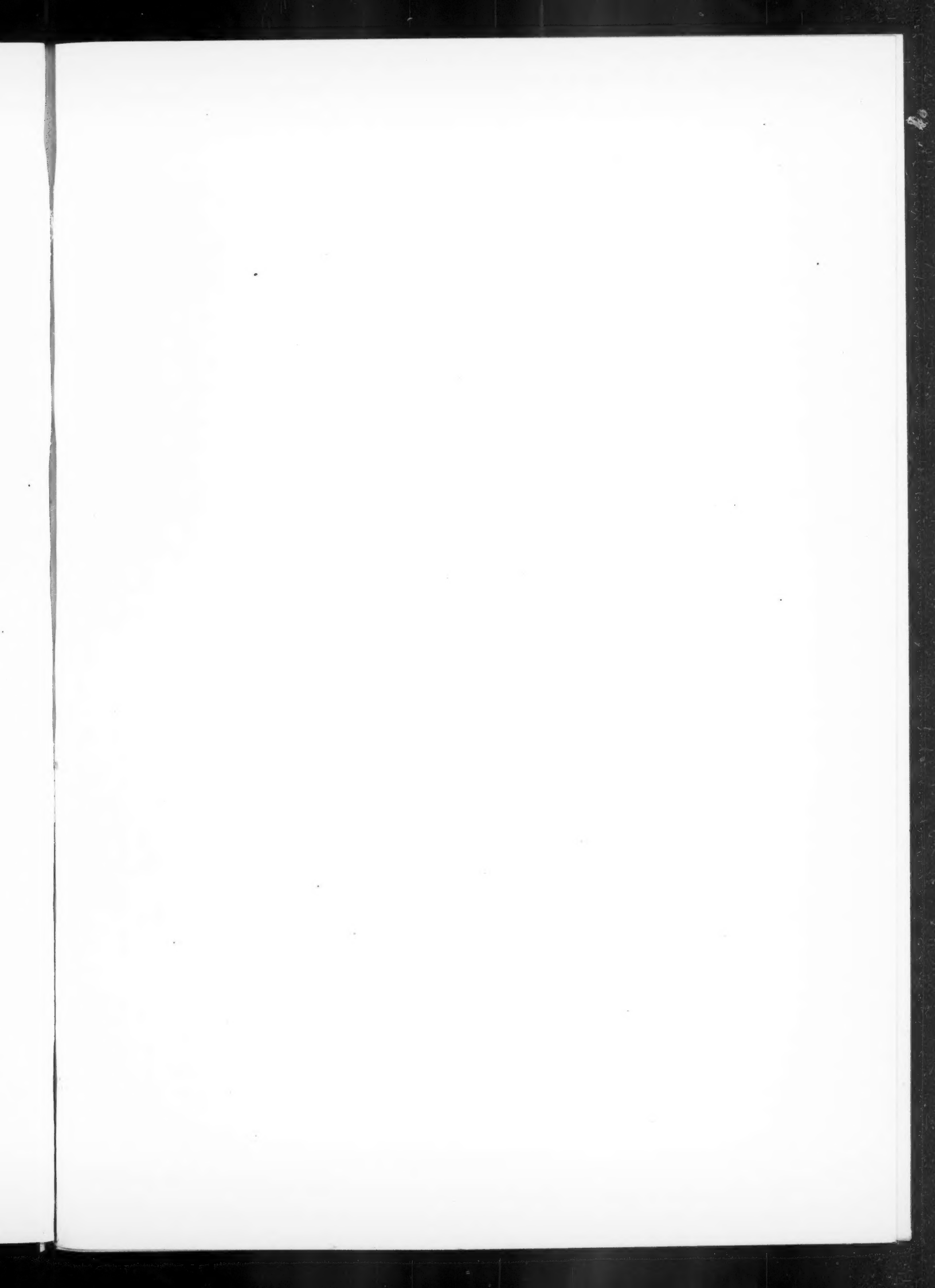
Your obedient servant,

A. VAN DE PUT.

Victoria & Albert Museum,
S. Kensington, London.

NOTE

Mr. Charles Henry Hart calls our attention to an error in Mr. Blaikie-Murdoch's article on the 'Portrait of Anne Carey' in the last issue. Phoebe Wright, who, as Mr. Blaikie-Murdoch says, became Hoppner's wife, was the daughter of the "Pomethean modeler," Patience Wright. (See page 210.)





HOLBEIN : PORTRAIT OF A MUSICIAN
COLLECTION OF MR. HENRY GOLDMAN, NEW YORK

